

Evo Caterham Academy

Group One – Round 3

Castle Combe Sprint – 2nd July

Castle Combe is set in some of the most beautiful countryside in Wiltshire; the village of Castle Combe is owned by the National Trust and is definitely worth a visit. It boasts one of the finest hotels in the country, The Manor, which has its own golf course. Seemingly, a very small contingent of this Academy group had the audacity to book rooms there and had a luxurious time by all accounts! We were without Rob at this event; he had to cancel due to work commitments.

The circuit is quite a challenging one, through Folly down to Avon Rise, where it is essential to get the braking correct, and then on to Quarry, not for the feint hearted! The Esses next, and then on into Tower followed by Bobbies. This being a sprint, the course was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a lap and finished at Westway. Luckily this was not your first visit to Combe; you were lucky enough to have completed your ARDS Course and had the advantage of having the Caterham Testing day there as well. I don't think any of you bothered to walk the course and there were no convoy runs.

Signing on and scrutinnering over, a drivers briefing followed. This was given by David Potts who certainly gave a very informative and positive briefing. It was back to the paddock to get ready for practice which was due to start at 9.00. The weather forecasters had got it wrong, again, it was supposed to be warm, dry and sunny, and instead it was damp, cool and cloudy with drizzly rain. It was therefore imperative that competitors went out in strict number order as the conditions looked changeable.

We were joined for the day by our enthusiastic photographers, Big Dougie and Wee Dougie, who sped around the circuit on their rusty bikes; oops I mean trusty bikes, taking photos from all around the circuit. I think they thought the Tour de France had come to Castle Combe!! Mind you when I found out how much their bikes cost its no wonder they have to sell photos for a living!

There were a number of classes before us so there was plenty of time to sort out tyre pressures and set up etc and to watch others out on the course for inspiration. There were two practice runs and two timed runs. First practice came and the track was obviously quite slippery, even though it looked reasonably dry. There were quite a few spinners and Gary (no fear) Halcrow had us all on tenterhooks as he came off at Tower. It took some time for the car to be recovered but Gary was absolutely fine. He obviously did not hear the Clerks final words at the briefing 'use practice for familiarisation'! Apparently he locked up under braking, spun and head butted the tyre wall. The car was badly bent but our ever enthusiastic Midlands boys managed to get the car ready for the

next practice. I have not got practice times and they are not yet available on the website. As you know, there was a problem at the end of the day with the computer so it was not possible to obtain a proper result sheet.

I am going to mention Arm Restraints again, please do not attempt to go on the track without them. It's a good job I check you each time! I will not allow you out under any circumstances without them. We do have a couple of spare pairs; do please just ask if you have forgotten them.

It was lunch time; the weather looked to be brightening up a little but still damp and fairly gloomy. Gloomy was also the feeling amongst us Rugby fans, hearing that the Lions had lost the second Test by a huge margin, but better news in the Cricket, with England holding the Aussies to a draw in the Nat West Final. Wimbledon was on in the Tavern for tennis fans, no doubt David Pierpoint's family were there, David had had tickets for Wimbledon but chose to be at Combe, not so sure that's where his wife wanted to be!

First timed run and there was a feeling that there would be a change on the podium today. The track was still damp in places, both OJ and Andrew Telling had moments coming out of the Esses, Andrew hit the tyre wall, managed to get the car going again but this was a failed run. Trevor had a moment at Quarry but held it together. And what a surprise at the end of that run, Sean had an incredible time of 74.18, which took .27 seconds off the previous record, held by Nick Potter!! Now where did that come from? He was followed by Richard with a 74.59, then Simon Parker with a 75.20, this was a huge surprise to Simon and indeed everyone else! Simon Parfitt was close on his heels with 75.23 followed by Peter with a 75.36. Peter was absolutely delighted with this result.

The second run was going to be very exciting, there was lots to play for.

Although the track conditions seemed to be drier, quite a number of you were slower. Jim had an off at Quarry, he went flat over Avon Rise! He was taken to the medical centre for a check up but was absolutely fine. Not the same could be said about his car, this had to be taken back to Midlands for repair. It was looking as though Sean's record breaking time was not going to be beaten. Trevor and Gary were at the end of the running order, both were given a re-run due to faulty timing equipment, was one of these to be the winning run? Not quite, Gary dug deep and came up with an amazing time of 74.54 which gave him second place. This was a fantastic achievement by him, considering he had such a bad off at Tower in practice. Both Trevor and Richard could not compete with either Sean or Gary, and the final result was a real turnaround. Sean had won with the new record time of 74.18, and what a worthy winner, Gary second with 74.54, Richard McCann third with 74.59, Simon Parker fourth with 75.20, and Simon Parfitt fifth with 75.23. So, a change on the podium it was, Sean, Gary and Richard, well done indeed.

I have to say, considering the slippery conditions, you all did very well! It's great to see a change on top of the leader board, let's see what happens at the next event at Curborough.

Thanks to all of your 'willing' supporters, and to those of you who stayed for prize giving. There don't seem to be many people who do stay for this, please do try and make an effort, I know you have long journeys in front of you but it is nice to congratulate your fellow competitors, not just in our championship but in others as well.

Cuborough will be our final event before the racing begins, let's hope its dry and sunny, you have not had much luck with the weather so far.

Kim Denning
Championship Co coordinator